

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 CPR-01 CU-02 MCT-01 IO-13 ACDA-07

OPR-02 SY-05 SCA-01 /081 W

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FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8456

CONFIDENTIAL TANANARIVE 1509

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PDIP, MA, US

SUBJECT: BACKGROUND ON EXPULSION OF EMBASSY PERSONNEL

REF: TANANARIVE 1495

1. AT PRESS CONFERENCE LATE MORNING SEPT 23, PRIME
MINISTER ANNOUNCED EXPULSION OF MSSRS BENNETT AND ALLEN
OF EMBASSY STAFF FOR "INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL
AFFAIRS OF MADAGASCAR BECAUSE THEY WERE IMPLICATED IN
THE STUDENT STRIKES." THAT WAS THE ONLY ANNOUNCEMENT
PRIME MINISTER HAD TO MAKE AND HE OPENED PRESS
CONFERENCE TO QUESTIONS ON ALL SUBJECTS. A JOURNALIST
ASKED HIM OF WHAT SPECIFICALLY EMBASSY PERSONNEL HAD
BEEN ACCUSED, BUT PRIME MINISTER WAS EVASIVE. BENNETT
AND ALLEN DEPARTING FOR NAIROBI AT 18:25 ON EAST AFRICAN
AIRWAYS FLIGHT 844.

2. AS NOTED REFTEL, SITUATION IN TANANARIVE APPEARS
TO BE CALMER THAN LAST WEEK. NUMBER OF MILITARY PATROLS
HAS DILINISHED, AND NEWSPAPERS, DIRECTLY OR BETWEEN-THE-
LINES, HAVE BARELY REFERRED TO CONTINUING STRIKE BY
HANDFUL (PERHAPS NO MORE THAN FIFTY) OF STUDENTS AT TWO
TECHNICAL SCHOOLS IN TANANARIVE. THERE HAVE BEEN NO
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FURTHER CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN STRIKING STUDENTS AND

NON-STRIKERS OR GDRM-INSPIRED STRIKE BREAKERS, AND MOST CLASSES AT UNIVERSITY REPORTEDLY ARE OPERATING NORMALLY.

3. GDRM, AS WE HAVE NOTED IN PREVIOUS CABLES, HAS BEEN NERVOUS OVER ITS INABILITY TO GET SMALL HANDFUL OF STRIKING STUDENTS BACK INTO CLASSES. ALMOST EVERY GDRM OFFICIAL WITH WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN IN THE LAST TEN DAYS REFERS BACK TO EVENTS OF 1972 WHICH LED T TSIRANANA'S OVERTHROW, FOLLOWING SEEMINGLY HARMLESS STUDENT ACTIVITIES. GDRM OBVIOUSLY DOES NOT WISH TO GIVE APPEARANCE THAT IT DOES NOT HAVE ABSOLUTE CONTROL; AND DESPITE ITS CLAIMS THAT STUDENT STRIKES AND FIRE AT PRIME MINISTER'S PALACE WERE WORK OF "IMPERIALISTS-CAPITALISTS" AND EXTREME LEFT DISSIDENT GROUP MFM, GDRM MAY BE LOOKING FOR NEW SCAPEGOATS.

4. SEPTEL DESCRIBES NEXT WEEK'S "DJOUTCHE" IDEOLOGICAL SEMINAR WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE IN TANANARIVE AND FOR WHICH GDRM IS MAKING ELABORATE PREPARATIONS. WE HAVE JUST BEEN INFORMED THAT DURING PAST FEW HOURS GDRM HAS BECOME AWARE OF POSSIBLE DEMONSTRATIONS (BY UNKNOWN PARTICIPANTS) AT TIME OF OPENING OF "DJOUTCH" SEMINAR SEPT 28. THIS WOULD, OF COURSE, BE SERIOUS EMBARRASSMENT TO GDRM WITH PRESENCE OF EIGHTY VISITING DELEGATIONS AT SEMINAR AND MAY BE WHY GDRM HAS NOT YET DIVULGED WHERE SEMINAR WILL TAKE PLACE.

5. OUR OVERALL INCLINATION IS THAT GDRM IS RUNNING A BIT SCARED AND SEIZED ON ADMIN OFFICER'S LUNCH WITH STUDENTS IN AN IRRATIONAL MOVE PROBABLY LED BY HARD-NOSED, IDEOLOGICAL RADICAL, AND ANTI-WESTERN MINISTER OF INTERIOR AMPY PORTOS. PORTOS SERVED UNDER RATSIRAKA IN FOREIGN MINISTRY 1972-75 AND IS WELL- AND UNFAVORABLY-KNOWN TO THE EMBASSY SHEINBAUM

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: EXPULSION, DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL, STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: blochd0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976TANANA01509
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760359-0742
From: TANANARIVE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760925/aaaaavsc.tel
Line Count: 95
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 TANANARIVE 1495
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: blochd0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 OCT 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 JUN 2004 by ElyME>; WITHDRAWN <12 OCT 2004 by saccheem, PRIVACY, 22USC4354(B)>; RELEASED <29 OCT 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <03 NOV 2004 by blochd0
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BACKGROUND ON EXPULSION OF EMBASSY PERSONNEL
TAGS: PDIP, MA, US, (ALLEN), (BENNETT)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006